

February 28, 2019

To: Chairmen McCrory and Sanchez, Ranking Members Berthel and McCarty, and esteemed members of the Education Committee, thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on HB 7150.

My name is Ildar Revall and I am submitting this written testimony to express my strong opposition to proposed HB 7150, which, if passed, would require municipalities to fund a portion of the teachers' pension costs. I am a Wilton resident and the father of two boys. The only reason my wife and I invested our savings to buy a home in Wilton was to provide a wonderful education for our children.

However, I now have reason to believe that the quality of my children's education is going to be in jeopardy if HB 7150 is passed. Below I am quoting Kevin Smith, the superintendent of Wilton's schools, with whom I wholeheartedly agree that, for one, it's unjust to shift the burden on the municipalities, and especially disproportionally burden the municipalities that have maintained a solid financial standing and strive to attract the best teaching talent.

Kevin Smith: "Of significant concern as well is the Governor's proposal to require municipalities to fund a portion of teacher pension costs. I am vehemently opposed to this concept because, at its heart, it is a dereliction of state responsibility. For decades our state leaders failed to adequately fund the plan they created. Local municipalities had no influence over the design or the decision to fund (or not fund) the plan. Despite the fact that this crisis has been growing for years, our leaders in Hartford have turned a blind eye. Now, standing at a fiscal cliff, the solution appears to be to shift the burden to local municipalities including Wilton, that have responsibly managed their finances. And to add insult to injury, the Governor's plan also calls for a surcharge for towns like Wilton that pay teacher salaries that exceed the state median. The plan does not account for higher costs of living in areas such as Fairfield County, or the impact of binding arbitration, two factors beyond local control that strongly influence salary agreements. To make matters even more dire, the legislature is also contemplating a bill (SB 431) that proposes to divert motor vehicle tax revenue from municipalities to the state government."

It is clear that this proposal will result in additional tax burden on Wilton residents, and has a very strong possibility to reduce the quality of Wilton schools, basically punishing us for being responsible and trying to do well by our children. Please vote in opposition to proposed HB 7150.

Sincerely,

Ildar Revall

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